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## Suozzi seeks federal funds for green projects

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Nassau County Executive Thomas Suozzi and his Westchester counterpart made a coordinated video pitch yesterday for millions of dollars in federal stimulus money for green projects that are ready to proceed and would create jobs.

Suozzi asked for, among other things, \$23.4 million for a new bus system to serve The Hub area in Mineola and Uniondale, and \$13 million to upgrade the county's old, energy-sapping sewage treatment plants at Bay Park and Cedar Creek.

Westchester County Executive Andrew Spano listed \$3.5 million to install solar electricity cells to power four county office facilities and \$1.5 million to replace old, inefficient boilers.

Suozzi made the announcement at a news conference in Mineola, and Spano appeared via video link in an event geared to "Local Climate Action Week," which is being held by scores of localities to promote the use of stimulus money for ready-to-go projects that are also environmentally sound.

Nassau and Westchester are among the 38 "founding counties" of **Climate Communities**, a national organization that seeks to implement environmental change at the local level.

The organization notes that President-elect Barack Obama has said he wants to use federal stimulus money to create jobs as quickly as possible by funding local capital projects that have gone through the planning stage and are "shovel-ready."

"If you want the federal dollars to flow instantly - as soon as possible - local government is the way to go," Spano said.

After the news conference, Suozzi conceded that the federal government would have to devise some system of checks to ensure that federal funding did not simply replace local funding without creating new jobs.

Some of the money would create local construction jobs, such as an estimated 110 jobs for sewage plant upgrades, but others would generate jobs elsewhere, such as plans by both counties to buy energy



efficient vehicles, which are not manufactured in either county, he said.

The League of Conservation Voters praised the effort by Spano and Suozzi.

"Nassau County has been incredibly proactive in reducing its energy costs, and by leveraging federal dollars, would be able to deepen those efforts to achieve permanent taxpayer savings and environmental improvements," league spokesman Dan Hendrick said.

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